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ABSTRACT

Preceding a list of fifty ways to use advisory committees more effectively is a discussion on the expanding roles of vocational education and their advisory councils and on their relationship as a team. The list is intended to assist vocational instructors and administrators and is not meant to be exhaustive. The following ten examples are representative of some of the ideas included in the list: (1) involve members in planning ways for making occupational education available, attractive, and meaningful to all students without regard to race, creed, sex, religion, or geographical location; (2) send a reminder letter along with an agenda of the coming meeting to each member about two weeks before a scheduled meeting and invite suggestions for inclusion on the agenda; (3) provide members with maps of the campus to assist them in locating parking, meeting rooms, etc.; (4) inform the members about the pertinent actions and activities of the State Board for Vocational Education; (5) invite the members to school functions such as graduation, open house, special exhibits, athletic events, and plays; (6) encourage school administrators to reward the committee's efforts when particular goals have been achieved; (7) work through members to arrange a conducted tour of industrial facilities for school field trips; (8) put a name plate on donated equipment showing the contributing member's name and firm; (9) avoid unnecessary detail work for the advisory committee members; and (10) have in attendance at all committee meetings a representative of the occupational education department. (BM)

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50 WAYS TO GET MORE OUT OF YOUR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Presented at the

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"Business-Industry-Labor Inputs into
Vocational Education Personnel Development"

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USING ADVISORY COMMITTEES EFFECTIVELY

OR

FIFTY WAYS TO GET MORE OUT OF YOUR ADVISORY COMMITTEE*

I'm delighted to be able to share in this important conference with you today. We've been hearing from persons in high places lately that education, to be effective, must reflect the needs and the involvement of many segments of our society. In his State of the Union Message, President Carter indicated that a new Department of Education would be created during his first term in office--in the hope that education would be more responsive to the needs of our country.

Only last week Commissioner of Education, Ernest L. Boyer called together all of the Office of Education supervisors and spoke of his hopes for education in America. "Education must be viewed not simply as a pre-work ritual, but as a process to be pursued from the beginning of life to its end," he said.

He emphasized the need for lifelong learning for all citizens and continuing education for teachers. "Schools should be linked more closely to the home. During the early years, children's attitudes are shaped and values are formed.

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*By Dr. Albert J. Riendeau, Chief, Postsecondary and Adult Occupational Programs Branch, DVTE, U.S. Office of Education, at the Business-Industry-Labor Conference, The National Center for Vocational Education, April 3-5, 1978.

Parents--the first teachers--must become partners with public school teachers in early childhood education.

"Schools and colleges should relate to business and industry, as well. Clearly, we must add education to our work."

It is clear that Commissioner Boyer considers education too awesome a task to entrust solely to educators. Without linkages with the places of employment in the world of work, education may too quickly get out of step.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

In her letter dated February 10 in which she elaborated on this conference, Catharine Warmbrod stated that the purpose of the conference was "to develop programs and vehicles to update and upgrade the technical and instructional competencies of vocational instructors and administrators."

What I heard yesterday afternoon certainly appeared to be aimed at doing just that. Practically every state report stressed the use of advisory committees. The reported increase in the Georgia State Advisory Council from 24 to 34 members last year was indicative of the growing status of State Advisory Councils throughout the land. Our former Hiram Walker whiskey salesman from Illinois reported increased interest in the schools by business and industry. Then there was Michigan's "Stay-on-the-Job" and "Explore Yourself" programs which were designed by business, industry, labor, and education to give

the student a sense of belonging. New York's exchanges of personnel by business, industry and education as described by Bob Ullery--in his excellent report on "Club 20-20," gave us some insights on how far some States have gone with their exchange programs. The excellent film and report by team leader Russell Walker of Texas was another example of what could be accomplished by a cooperative effort by business, industry, education and labor.

It is a paradox of these technological times that unemployment and underemployment can exist side by side with critical labor shortages. Productivity, essential to growth, is sometimes achieved at the expense of the individual whose skills become obsolete. The worker who does not keep pace through training and education soon falls by the productive wayside. Our schools and colleges need help in reading signs of the future. Tomorrow's job demands must be anticipated now, if workers are to be prepared so as to escape the unemployment roles of the future.

EXPANDING ROLE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Vocational education has a leading role to play, and a major contribution to make. All of us in all fields who make up the total community must strive to cope with the social and economic forces which are bringing profound changes in the patterns of our lives. Vocational leadership must involve itself more deeply in external affairs, and must open the door wider for greater involvement of others in the vocational education community.

This wider involvement is the thrust of the new vocational education legislation. This is the message which is found upon close reading of nearly every section of Public Law 94-482. The new legislation could well be entitled "Blueprint for Involvement."

EXPANDING ROLE FOR ADVISORY COUNCILS

Greater involvement with the outside world is implicit in the strengthened and expanded advisory councils under the new Act. Working with advisory councils is not new for vocational education leaders. But the significance of the new legislation is that advisory councils are not merely to be tolerated, but are to play an expanded role in the overall planning of vocational education programs. Representation at both the national and state levels is being expanded to bring in more outside involvement--such as guidance and counseling, correctional institutions, women with specific knowledge and experience of sex discrimination in employment and sex bias in vocational education, State Manpower Service Councils under CETA, and higher education. It is particularly significant that the law specifies that a majority of the advisory council membership shall not be from the field of education. They must be outsiders! The NACVE will no longer advise and report only to the Commissioner of Education, but to the President, Congress, and head of any other federal department or agency.

WORKING AS A TEAM--MERC/Q

The new vocational education legislation calls for State evaluations every five years by the Office of Education. We call these week-long reviews "MERC/Q's", which stands for Management Evaluation Review for Compliance and Quality. We do ten States and one Territory each year. We have just completed South Dakota, Alabama, and North Dakota. Next week our MERC/Q team will be in Oregon. Each team is made up of vocational educators from OE, representatives from Adult Education, CETA, Office for Civil Rights, and a member of the National Advisory Council for Vocational Education. This team visit is in no way intended to "snoopervise" state efforts but rather is a joint enterprise to review selected and random items from the vocational education regulations to measure the degree of compliance. This is a rare opportunity for providing technical assistance in some cases. It is an opportunity to study first-hand some of the unique problems encountered by the States. It is another example of advisory council involvement in the improvement of vocational education.

HOW CAN WE GET MORE OUT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES?

Vocational education teachers at the secondary, post-secondary and adult levels have utilized local advisory committees with varying degrees of intensity during the past half century. Vocational agriculture may have been among the earliest programs to successfully capture the advantages of advice from local committees. During the late forties and early fifties,

the concept of local advisory committees was being regularly encouraged by State supervisory personnel and by vocational teacher education departments at the colleges. Since this was usually an option left to the teachers, committees were organized in some communities but not in others.

We have reached the point where few vocational education managers would consider establishing new programs without first appointing a working advisory committee. And the remarkable thing about these committees is their unwillingness to serve as window dressing for educators. Unless there is a job to do and they are part of the action, they would prefer to be non-members. So in the belief that advisory committees thrive on involvement, I have prepared a laundry list--fifty ways to get more out of your advisory committees. Cathy Warmbrod has had copies made of this paper for your packets. Please note that it is committed to a future publication of Industrial Education magazine.

Based upon the imagination and creativity that has been exhibited in this room yesterday and today, I have no doubt that this list can be expanded upon. My point was--the many ways of getting more out of your advisory committees is limited only by your imagination.

THE BUCK STOPS HERE

I don't suppose times have ever been more challenging to those of us involved in education than at this very moment

in history. With the weakening of the dollar and the rising rate of inflation, the taxpayer is called upon to dig deeper for the support of education. The energy crisis is still with us. Concerned parents worry about the moral fiber of our leaders--they fear for the effects on their children. These are troubled times, calling for the steady hands and stout hearts of adults to set examples for our youth.

It is no time to be sidestepping issues or passing the buck. Let us remember the sign on President Truman's desk which read "The Buck Stops Here." The job to be done by vocational education requires the help of industry, business, and labor. The very future of our youth depends on such a team effort. Let me close with a little poem, author unknown, to illustrate my point:

PASSING THE BUCK DOWN THE LINE

1. Said the college professor,
"Such rawness in a student is a shame.
Lack of preparation in high school
Is to blame.

2. Said the high school teacher,
"Good Heavens, that boy's a fool.
The fault, of course, is with the
Grammar school.

3. The grammer school teacher
Said, "From such stupidity
May I be spared. They sent
Him up to me so unprepared."

4. The primary teacher huffed,
"Kindergarten blockheads all.
They call that preparation--
Why, it's worse than none at all."

5. The Kindergarten teacher said,
"Such lack of training never
Did I see. What kind of a
Woman must that mother be?"

6. The mother said, "Poor helpless
Child. He's not to blame.
His father's people
Were all the same."

7. Said the father at the end
Of the line, "I doubt the
Rascal's even mine."

FIFTY WAYS TO GET MORE OUT OF YOUR ADVISORY COMMITTEES*

Advisory committees are assuming an expanding role in vocational education. Our schools and colleges are under pressure to provide skills for a world which is engulfed in a technological revolution. New methods and materials used in modern day occupational fields are being developed at a breathtaking pace. Supplying the skilled personnel for securing employment in this rapidly changing labor market calls for flexibility in occupational education programs, and the full cooperation of business, labor, industry, and governments at all levels to help keep goals of employers in sight.

Discovering what employers expect as entry-level employees, or as upgraded skilled workers, calls for cooperative planning by schools and industries. Periodically, occupational education programs at all levels should be reviewed for appropriateness. Vocational education at the secondary level should provide maximum options for students to find employment or pursue postsecondary vocational education programs. Postsecondary occupational education programs should provide for basic entry level skills and for upgrading or advancement in the student's selected occupational area.

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*By Dr. Albert J. Riendeau, Chief, Postsecondary and Adult Occupational Programs Branch, DVTE, U.S. Office of Education, and author of Advisory Committees for Occupational Education: A Guide to Organization and Operation, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977. Copyrighted for publication in the June, 1978 issue of Industrial Education Magazine.

The educational institutions are looking to advisory committees for keeping them on target in terms of student placement. Vocational education program objectives, curriculum, and teaching environment are developed, conducted, and evaluated in consultation with appropriate advisory committees made up of representatives from business, industry, labor, government and other potential employment sources.

So far advisory committees have demonstrated a remarkable degree of willingness to be "exploited" by schools and colleges. Not only do they give unstintingly of their time, counsel, and expertise, but they appear to have a great storehouse of untapped resources which they would gladly share with educational institutions if they were asked. The following, then, is a list of ways to get more out of your advisory committees. With a little effort the list could, of course, be expanded.

1. Involve lay advisory members in planning ways for making occupational education available, attractive, and meaningful to all students without regard to race, creed, sex, religion, or geographical location.

2. Provide a handbook for each advisory committee member explaining the purpose, operation, by-laws, goals, and objectives of the advisory committee, and the functions lay advisory members are expected to perform.

3. Invite lay advisory members to assist in developing ways for providing experiences which permit students to learn by doing.

4. Provide parking permits for members to facilitate attending committee meetings at the school.

5. Schedule advisory committee meetings at a time convenient for members to attend.

6. Send a reminder letter along with an agenda of the coming meeting to each member about two weeks before a scheduled meeting and invite suggestions for inclusion on the agenda.

7. Run the committee meetings on an organized time schedule and hold to this time schedule.

8. Make follow-up reports promptly to the advisory committee regarding action taken on recommendations made by the committee members.

9. Invite lay advisory members to assist in identifying options for students to change occupational choices and educational programs in concert with the changing needs of the employing community, economic necessity, personal satisfaction, individual competencies, and interests.

10. Encourage the lay advisory members to visit the school whenever possible, particularly the classes with which the advisory committee is involved.

11. Provide lay advisory members with maps of the campus to assist them in locating parking, meeting rooms, etc.

12. Send a letter over the signature of the school's leading administrator officially notifying each advisory member of his or her appointment to the advisory committee.

13. Encourage individual meetings with advisory committee members when an administrator or representative of the school requires special information.

14. Keep lay members informed about current and pending State and Federal legislation that will affect the school's occupational program.

15. Inform the lay advisory members about the pertinent actions and activities of the State Board for Vocational Education.

16. Assign the responsibility for taking minutes to a school representative at each committee meeting.

17. Provide refreshments at each committee meeting.

18. Inform the lay advisory members about special studies affecting the educational program of the school.

19. Invite instructors to occasionally sit in on advisory committee meetings on the subject they teach.

20. Ask the lay advisory members for recommendations and comments for improving the effectiveness of the advisory committee and its meetings.

21. Invite the lay advisory members to school functions such as graduation, open house, special exhibits, athletic events, and plays.

22. Establish and maintain a climate of informality at committee meetings, encouraging a two-way interchange of information.

23. Encourage school administrators to reward the advisory committee's efforts when particular goals have been achieved.

24. Inform lay advisory members about the action and activities of the State Advisory Council for Vocational Education.

25. If possible, attend industry programs when invited by lay advisory members.

26. Continually inform the lay advisory members about events concerning vocational education at the local, State and National levels.

27. Use the telephone for conversations with lay members when confirming facts or seeking advice.

28. Plan an annual breakfast or dinner for all advisory committee members and invite a distinguished speaker.

29. Invite advisory committee members to serve as guest lecturers in order to demonstrate special techniques or skills, or to discuss current practices in a particular occupation.

30. Work through advisory members to arrange a conducted tour of industrial facilities for school field trips.

31. Inform the lay advisory member about the actions and activities of the school's general advisory council.

32. Schedule committee meetings regularly.

33. Seek advice of lay advisory members for ways to maintain professional leadership and administrative growth in occupational education to make it a continuous process for providing program regeneration and self renewal of professional staff for ensuring future dynamic leadership.

34. Mail each member a copy of the minutes of the advisory committee meeting as soon after the meeting as possible.

35. Make a reminder call to each member during the morning of the scheduled advisory committee meeting.

36. Hold meetings in a room that provides comfortable and quiet surroundings.

37. Recognize the efforts of a lay advisory member who contributes outstanding service to the program by any or all of the following methods: a letter to this person's superior, a letter to his or her family, a letter of commendation, a release to the school and local newspaper, or a mention of it in major speeches.

38. Put a name plate on donated equipment showing the contributing member's name and firm.

39. Encourage instructors to visit and tour the facilities of industries which relate to their teaching.

40. All advisory committee rosters should be kept current and updated. Outdated rosters can be a source of embarrassment.

41. Check to see that no advisory committee appointments are politically motivated.

42. Seek assistance of lay advisory members for developing curriculum which is flexible enough to permit students to enter or exit programs at increasingly complex occupational competency levels.

43. Check to see that the qualifications of all potential lay advisory members are carefully reviewed by appropriate school officers to ensure a good working committee.

44. Include a student, a graduate, women, and members of ethnic or racial minorities on the committees.

45. Schedule the term of membership for a definite period of time, with provisions for a regular system of replacement.

46. Avoid unnecessary detail work for the advisory committee members. They are busy individuals who are serving on a voluntary basis.

47. Have in attendance at all committee meetings a representative of the occupational education department.

48. Have supervisors and/or coordinators of vocational education programs attend all advisory committee meetings on their particular programs.

49. Have the school maintain a complete file of minutes of all committee meetings. Copies will be distributed to all committee members and alternates.

50. Plan well in advance to hold at least one luncheon meeting per year in a good restaurant, if possible, for the members of each active advisory committee.

And there you have it, fifty ways for getting more out of your advisory committees. No such list would ever be complete, but the list suggests that there may be a lot of useful service remaining in that tired acting advisory committee if a little imagination is applied--directly from your list.